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## *Inuenta est blandae rationis imago:* Visualizing the Mausoleum of the Flavii\*

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**SUMMARY:** The North African mausoleum of the Flavii family hosts a remarkable verse inscription that interrogates the relationship between writing and architecture by exploring a range of spatial and temporal dynamics. The poetry invites its audience to “visualize” the monument through a process that includes viewing the building’s architectural language, reading the inscribed poetry as “literature,” and constructing mental images in response to both stimuli. This visualization process, which also requires the audience to imagine the voices of various different characters involved in commissioning, constructing, and commenting on the monument, enacts a powerful form of commemoration.

### 1. THE MAUSOLEUM OF THE FLAVII

JUST A FEW KILOMETERS WEST OF THE MODERN CITY OF KASSERINE, IN Tunisia, lie the ruins of ancient Cillium. These ruins reveal evidence of an ancient town thriving as a result of Roman settlement and trade from the second century C.E.; they include baths, a capitol, an arch with the town’s statue of colonial status engraved upon it, and a theater that could have accommodated as many as 2,000 or 2,500 people.<sup>1</sup> Among these ruins, on the road

\* I owe a great debt of thanks to Brent Shaw for introducing me to the monument of the Flavii as part of a fascinating seminar on Roman North Africa in the Classics Department at Princeton, and for stoically commenting on versions of this article even when most unwell. Andrew Wilson also reviewed a draft and kindly supplied me with his own photographs of the monument, and the Institute of Greece, Rome and the Classical Tradition at Bristol supported a period of research. I learned much from the generous contributions of audiences at papers delivered in Princeton, Balliol College (Oxford), and the Institute of Classical Studies (London). The anonymous readers for *TAPA* offered further helpful suggestions, for which I am most grateful. All errors that remain are my own.

<sup>1</sup> The Kasserine archeological survey, undertaken in the 1980s, covers the area around Cillium and down to Thelepte, 30 kilometers to the south-west (Hitchner 1988). The

leading in a north-westerly direction out of the city, stands the mausoleum of the Flavii family, a monumental representation of Libyco-Punic cultural tradition engaging with the forces of Roman influence.<sup>2</sup>

The mausoleum stands fourteen meters tall, and is composed of three blockish units (see Figure 1). The topmost level consists of a *cella*, which is now missing a statue of the deceased and the twelve columns that would have formed a peristyle around it.<sup>3</sup> The monument is also missing the conventional Libyco-Punic pyramid that would, most probably, have topped this *cella*. The inscription reveals that there was also a sculpture of a rooster perched at the summit. The middle level of the mausoleum is a regular cube, bearing the epitaphs of the family inscribed between twelve Corinthian pilasters.<sup>4</sup> The bottom level is a plain cube, except for a lengthy verse inscription laid out in three unevenly-filled columns on the side of the monument facing the road (see Figure 2).<sup>5</sup> This inscription consists of two poems, addressed by an anonymous narrator to the Flavius Secundus who commissioned the monument. The poems describe the monument and its locale, and celebrate the piety demonstrated by Flavius Secundus.

Between the epitaphs and the poems, the monument is unusually verbose and peculiarly self-reflexive. It explicitly displays much about the family members who commissioned and were commemorated by the building, and it implicitly reveals even more about their relationships with each other and with the community in which they lived. The rich inscriptions on the monument were given little attention until about twenty years ago, but since then they have received several worthy treatments. Most notable is the edited volume, *Les Flavii de Cillium*, produced by the Groupe de Recherches sur l'Afrique

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survey has uncovered remains of large farming estates in the countryside around the city, with terraces and hydraulic systems, barns, oil presses, villas, and villages: evidence of Roman settlement and the introduction of olive culture and trade from the second century C.E. onwards. See also Raven 1993.

<sup>2</sup> Shaw (forthcoming). On "Romanization" as a phenomenon manifested and explored through epigraphy, particularly funerary epigraphy, see MacMullen 1982 and Meyer 1990, with Zanker 2000 (on tombs after the Social Wars, 31–32). Some cautionary notes concerning the concept of "Romanization" in this context are sounded by Freeman 1993 and Woolf 1996. Hitchner 1995 surveys the contribution made to this debate by the Flavii monument and by the publication of G.R.A.A. 1993. Cuomo 2011 offers a recent exploration of the complexities of Roman imperial objectives in North Africa in her analysis of a military engineer's inscription celebrating his work on a local aqueduct.

<sup>3</sup> For a reconstruction of the original monument, see Hallier 1993.

<sup>4</sup> *CIL* 8.211, 214–16.

<sup>5</sup> *CIL* 8.212–13; *CLE* 1552 A and B.



Figure 1. The Mausoleum. Photograph: Andrew Wilson. Reproduced by permission.

Antique.<sup>6</sup> The volume gathers together archeologists, epigraphists, historians, linguists, and philologists to treat the monument holistically, revealing its complexities by viewing it from multiple angles (literally and metaphori-

<sup>6</sup> G.R.A.A. 1993.



Figure 2. The Layout of the Poems. Photograph: Andrew Wilson. Reproduced by permission.

cally). This collected volume in turn informs the subtle approach taken to the mausoleum by E. Thomas, who unpicks some of the curious parallels between the mausoleum's architecture and its inscriptions (2007: 197–200).

This article focuses on the poetry inscribed upon the mausoleum. The verse inscriptions are quite remarkably long, and their style and complexity make



them rivals of many texts that have survived through a manuscript tradition. Indeed, though the details in the inscription make it clear that the poems were composed to celebrate the monument on which they were written, their length, formal features, and thematic concerns invite comparison with poems such as Statius's *Silvae*. We may read the poems on the Flavii mausoleum as literary artifacts operating in the same mode as epigrammatic or occasional poems that are physically, if not semantically, detached from the events or objects they praise. Such literary poems use written language to highlight the spatial and temporal dynamics surrounding a specific object, and to guide the visualization processes that connect communities with that object.<sup>7</sup> Identifying some of these pointedly scribal features in the Flavii poems allows us to appreciate the actual inscription of these poems on the monument they celebrate as an act of remarkable creativity.<sup>8</sup>

The text and translation of the inscriptional poetry can be found immediately below. The following section considers whether the poetry might be referring to a material image or a descriptive text when it draws the reader's attention to the *imago* that is presented by the monument. This third section also addresses the peculiarities of the poetry's inscription and adduces two of Statius's *Silvae* as possible models for the poetry. Section 4 extends this discussion to show how general communities of receptive viewers are implicated not just in the appreciation, but also in the production of this multifaceted *imago*, as their imaginative responses to the architecture and the writing lead them to create their own idiosyncratic mental images. Section 5 narrows its focus to discuss the way in which the poet embeds tropes of speech and writing in his poetic *descriptio*. Previously spoken or written responses to the monument are quoted in the poetry to conjure up vivid moments in the history of the monument's construction and reception, and the poet ponders the implications of reviewing and repeating these moments in his own personal "revisiting" of both the place and the commission. The sixth and final section turns from the poet to the commissioner of the monument,

<sup>7</sup>Recent approaches to these literary dynamics can be found in Roman 2001; Fitzgerald 2007; McNelis 2008; Livingstone and Nisbet 2010.

<sup>8</sup>Elsner 1996 on Augustus's *Res gestae* explores a similarly unusual inscriptional practice, but with reference to a very different kind of text. See also Bing 2009: 204–5 on epigram's development through the parallel processes of inscription and literary circulation, with particular reference to the ambiguous relationship between the Egyptian Pharos and Posidippus's epigram "on" the building.

and to what the poetry describes innovatively as *memoratio*.<sup>9</sup> The site of the monument and its poetry is the Flavii family's eternal resting place, and in continuing to appreciate the monumental *imago*, concrete or textual, real or virtual, viewers and readers are granting immortality to the relationships that lie behind its original commissioning.<sup>10</sup> *Memoratio* is not a finite act of *pietas* limited to the original commissioning members of the Flavii family or to the poet's repetition of his assignment, but an endlessly renewable act of visual reconstruction, collaboratively performed by the monument's artist(s) and audience(s).

## 2. THE POEMS

The text of the poems will be useful for further discussion. The inscription consists of one poem written in hexameters (90 lines), and a second follow-up poem written in elegiac couplets (20 lines), though no division is made between the two in the inscription.<sup>11</sup>

*Poem A (90 lines in hexameters)*

Sint licet exiguae fugientia tempora uitae  
paruaq(ue) raptorum cito transeat hora dierum  
mergat et Elysiis mortalia corpora terris  
adsidue rupto Lachesis male conscia penso,

<sup>9</sup>The term *commemoratio* occurs in classical Latin, although it is almost never found outside prose authors (doubtless partly due to difficulty fitting the final cretic in a dactylic meter, at least until later Latin poets started to shorten the final *o*). Without its usual *con-*prefix, however, the word is exceptionally rare, and indeed finds its first and almost only attestation in the poem on the mausoleum of the Flavii. Soubiran 1993 and Courtney 1995 compare only Maximianus. Other *hapax legomena* in the poem include *sistrigeri* (A 84), *cerineos* (A 88), and *florisapos* (A 90).

<sup>10</sup>As Bodel 1997 points out, Varro explores how memorialization remains associated with physical monuments even when it has moved into other domains: *sic monimenta quae in sepulcris, et ideo secundum uiam, quo praetereuntis admoneant et se fuisse et illos esse mortalis. ab eo cetera quae scripta ac facta memoriae causa monimenta dicta* ("Thus with monuments which are on tombs, and hence along the road, so that they can remind those passing by that they too once existed and that the passers-by are mortal. From this, other things that are written or produced for the sake of memory are called monuments," *Ling.* 6.49). See Fowler 2000: 197–98 on Horace's most famous *monumentum* in *Odes* 3.30, following Kraus 1994: 86 on Livy's use of the term (also explored in Livy by Jaeger 1998 and Feldherr 1998).

<sup>11</sup>*CLE* 1552 = *CIL* 8.212–13. Full texts can also be found in G.R.A.A. 1993: 66–70 and Courtney 1995: 186–93, both with translation and commentary. The text here is that of G.R.A.A., the translation my own, with debts to both G.R.A.A. and Courtney.

iam tamen inuenta est blandae rationis imago per quam prolatos homines in tempora plu[ra] longior excipiat memoratio multa(ue) seruet secum, per titulos mansuris fortius annis.	5
Ecce recens pietas omni placitura fauore ingentem famae numerum cum laude meretur exemplo iam plena nouo, quam Flauius alto more Secundus agens patrio signauit honore.	10
Quis non iam pronis animi uirtutibus adsit, quis non hoc miretur opus fusasq(ue) uidendo diuitias stupeat tantos se cernere census per quos aetherias surgunt monimenta per auras?	15
Haec est fortunae melius laudanda facultas, sic sibi perpetuas faciunt impendia sedes, sic immortales scit habere pecunia mores aeterno quotiens stabilis bene figitur usu.	20
Viderit ille furor, nimio qui ducitur auro, quem trahit argenti uenalis sanguine candor, uiderit et fusae uanis in amoribus errans gloria luxuriae, peregrinas quaerere magno quae didicit uestes gemmasq(ue) nitore placentes	25
aut ab Aeruthreo uenientia munera fluctu, quam laedunt gentes uario certamine rerum, Graecia cum pueris, Hispania Pallados usu, uenatu Libyae tellus, Orientis amomo, Aegyptos Phariis leuitatibus, artibus actis	30
Gallia semper ouans, diues Campania uino. Haec cito deficient et habent breue munus amoris momentis damnata suis, sed si quis ad omnes respiciat uitae casus hominemque laboret metiri breuitate sua, tunc credere discet	35
nil aliud melius fieri nisi uiribus aevi quot possit durare diu sub honore deorum. Nunc ego non dubitem tacitis Acherontos in umbris, si post fata manent sensus, gaudere parentem saepe, Secunde, tuum reliquas et spernere turmas	40
quod sciat hic tantam faciem superesse sepulchri perpetua nouitate sui, s[i]c stare nitentes consensus lapidum, sic de radice leuatos in melius creuisse gradus, ut et angulus omnis sic quasi mollitae ductus sit stamine cerae.	45
Mobilibus signis hilaris scalptura n[ou]a[t]ur, et licet atsidue probet hos uaga turba [dec]ores,	





*Poem B (20 lines in elegiacs)*

Huc iterum, Pietas, uenerandas erige mentes et mea quo nosti carmina more foue.	
Ecce Secundus adest iterum, qui pectore sancto non monimenta patri, sed noua templa dedit.	
Quo nunc, Calliope, gemino me limite cogis, quas iam transegi, rusus adire uias?	5
Nempe fuit nobis operis descriptio magni, diximus et iunctis saxa polita locis, circuitus nemorum, currentes dulciter undas atque reportantes m[ell]a frequenter apes.	10
Hoc tamen, hoc solum [n]ostrae, puto, default arti, dum cadis ad multos, ebria Musa, iocos: in summo tremulas galli non diximus alas, altior extrema qui, puto, nube uolat.	
Cuius si membris uocem natura dedisset, cogeret hic omnes surgere mane deos.	15
Et iam nominibus signantur limina certis, cernitur et titulis credula uita suis.	
Opto, Secunde, geras multos feliciter annos, et quae fecisti tu monimenta legas.	20

*Poem A*

Although the timespan of a brief life is fleeting, and the short hour of stolen days passes quickly and jealous Lachesis relentlessly drags mortal bodies down into the Elysian fields by cutting the thread of life, now, however, a representation of charming reason has been found, by means of which a more lasting commemoration may embrace men and prolong their timespan and preserve many details in the process, with the years destined to last more strongly through the inscriptions.

Look! An act of piety, bound to please everyone, which deserves a huge amount of fame and praise, one now full of new style, which Flavius Secundus, working within the ancient tradition, has marked out with the honor due to his father. Who could ever be in its presence without the noble qualities of his mind fully supportive; who would not marvel at this work and, in seeing the riches poured into it, stand astonished to observe such expense, by means of which the monument rears up through the heavenly breezes?

This is a more praiseworthy use of wealth; in this way expenditure creates a permanent resting place, in this way money discovers how to establish enduring traditions, when it is firm and invested well in an eternal product. Let the madness that is incited by too much gold see this, madness that is invoked by the gleam of silver bought with blood; and let the reckless pride in extravagance poured out on empty desires see it too, pride which has learned

to seek out foreign clothes and jewels whose appeal lies in their great shine or possessions coming from the Red Sea, pride which foreign societies exacerbate through their diverse rivalry in the supply of material goods: Greece with its slave boys, Spain with its produce of Pallas, the lands of Libya with their hunting, the lands of the East with their perfume, Egypt with the frivolities of the Pharos, Gaul always boasting in the arts it has achieved, Campania rich in wine.

These quickly lose their attraction and bring a short reward of pleasure, condemned by their own transience, but if anyone were to review all the hazards of life and make the effort to measure a man in all the shortness of his existence, then he will learn to understand that nothing better is achieved than that which is able to last long with the strength of great age, and with the gods' approval.

Now I do not doubt that among the silent shades of Acheron, if consciousness remains after death, your father often rejoices, Secundus, and spurns the other ranks of the dead, because he knows that here such a remarkable form of a tomb exists for him, one of permanent novelty, and he knows that a shining construction of stones stands thus, that the levels have grown upwards from the base ever more impressively thus, so it is that every single edge is defined thus, as if by a thread through softened wax. The cheerful sculpture is renewed by mobile markings, and the wandering crowd can admire these decorations uninterruptedly and marvel at the gleaming columns evenly poised above. Indeed you have offered up to the gods not just the inscription of his military service but even your father himself, watching so often as he does these delights which once he himself granted to the place, when he established the many products of Bacchus and decided to lay out the first vines and furnished the grove with a more regular water supply.

May the Fates and the Stygian ruler of dreadful night permit me to say: your father ought now to be considered immortal—look!—and to have deserted the grim home of abandoned Dis, now that he prefers to inhabit this monument for the rest of time and to live forever in the inscribed names, to settle in the well-known woods, and from here to contemplate the family house peacefully and without interruption, and always to have nearby the home he granted to his children.

Perhaps many, commenting on these things in empty chatter, may say that when someone builds a monument for the future while he is still alive, it is a harbinger of a more imminent death. I do not hold such an opinion, but I think that those people can be at ease, those who have chosen to prepare an eternal resting place and to set the foundations of walls that will never collapse, according to the firm principles by which they live. The road of the Fates is firmly set and Atropos does not waver among the threads of life: once she has begun to spin the first strand, believe me, Secundus, you will travel through the allotted years. But you will be at ease, you will be rich deep in your heart, now that you cannot be a burden for anyone and do not make wills filled with obligations, now that your heir does not fear that he must build something similar. Now, rather, whatever you leave, all of it will go wherever your wishes want it to go.

But attention to the work and its lofty beauties call me back. It stands as a towering glory and strikes the nearby clouds and measures the route of the sun. If by chance your eyes should wish to survey the mountains, the summits are conquered, one by one; if you should look to the plain, the ground lies hidden below. It is said that the Colossus does not soar above the hills of Romulus in such a way, nor does the obelisk in the Circus rise into the winds, and the Pharos does not reveal the twists and turns of the rattle-bearing Nile quite like this, when it illuminates its water with all-seeing fire.

What does learned piety not achieve? Look! The stone, with many skylights cut into it, encourages charming bees to rush inside and to build waxy nests so that this house, sweet with thyme-flavored nectar, may always waft out floral-scented perfumes while they produce fresh honey.

#### *Poem B*

Piety, turn your venerable mind this way again, and tend to my songs in the way you know so well. Look! Secundus is here again, who out of the devotion of his heart has given his father not a monument, but a new temple. To what end are you now forcing me, Calliope, on a twin route, to go once again down roads I have already traveled? Surely I made a description of the great work, and I mentioned the stones polished in their fitted spots, the surrounding groves, the waters rushing peacefully and the bees regularly bringing back honey.

This, however, this alone I think was missing from our art (in which you descend into many jokes, my tipsy Muse): I did not tell of the trembling wings of the rooster on the top, which, I think, flies above the highest cloud. If nature had given a voice to the body of this rooster, it would force all the gods to wake up in the morning.

Now the façade is marked with firmly-fixed words, and a life trusting in the inscriptions can be observed. I hope, Secundus, that you live happily for many years, and that you read the monument that you yourself made.

### 3. WHAT IS THE MONUMENTAL IMAGO?

Roman society granted considerable value to visual representations of the dead. This is best exemplified by elite Republican Roman families' use of *imagines*, the wax masks that represented praiseworthy ancestors. The *imagines* were objects to be admired and in turn, particularly when brought to life during funeral processions, they appeared to observe the behavior of their own descendants.<sup>12</sup> The poetry on the monument of the Flavii is a long way

<sup>12</sup> Plin. *HN* 35.6.1; Polyb. 6.53.4–54.1. Elsner 1996; Elsner 2002: 9; Flower 1996. In literature Cicero includes some prime rhetorical flourishes on this theme, acting the part of Clodia's ancestors in *Pro Caelio*, inviting his audience to rise to their ancestors' glory in *Pro Sestio* (136), and offering a rather more cynical twist on *laudationes* of the dead

from the world of such specifically Roman and aristocratic traditions, but it displays a related preoccupation with different kinds of visual representation in a funerary context. Indeed, it frames this interest through an exploration of the same term, *imago*, using it to describe a range of representational aspects of the monument.<sup>13</sup>

The first poem on the monument begins with a commonplace concession to the shortness of human life: *sint licet exiguae fugientia tempora uitae*.<sup>14</sup> The poet makes a pointed demonstration of his cultural expertise by backing up the statement with a learned reference to Lachesis, the Fate cutting away at the threads of each human lifespan.<sup>15</sup> But this dismal description of human mortality is interrupted by the markedly contrasting tone in which the poet finishes his sentence (A 5–8):

iam tamen inuenta est blandae rationis imago  
per quam prolatos homines in tempora plu[ra]  
longior excipiat memoratio multa(ue) seruet  
secum, per titulos mansuris fortius annis.

Now, however, a representation of charming reason has been found, by means of which a more lasting commemoration may embrace men and prolong their timespan and preserve many details in its process, with the years destined to last more firmly through the inscriptions.

The poet sets out the object of his praise: the newly discovered *blandae rationis imago*, which contradicts the finality of Lachesis's actions and produces a kind of commemoration, *memoratio*. At this early stage in the poem the meaning of this vague phrase "a representation of charming reason" is left open, an ambiguity that will echo through the rest of the inscription.

The *imago* must refer to a kind of representation, one that, when viewed correctly, will create the celebrated *memoratio*, but the nature of this repre-

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in *Brutus* (62). See Treggiari 2003 and most recently Brooke 2011. Ovid's use of the term *imago* shows that the value of portraiture persists even in a less elite funerary context when he ponders his exilic "death" in the *Tristia*: *siquis habes nostris similes in imagine uultus* ("if any of you has a portrait bust in my image," 1.7.1).

<sup>13</sup> Henderson 2002: 11–14 shows how even outside a funerary context terms such as *imago* and *imagine* are used by Pliny to evoke a range of philosophical and rhetorical efforts to represent the self, though he also admits that "works of art in Pliny are *always* in the game of immortality, under the consecrating shadow of death" (33).

<sup>14</sup> For other such aphoristic phrases in the epigraphic corpus, see Soubiran 1993.

<sup>15</sup> Compare Statius's early defiance of Clotho in *Silv.* 1.4.1–2, with Henderson 1998: 40. The reference to Lachesis here is followed up later by a mention of Atropos (A 70).

sensation is unspecified. Is the poet referring to the monument on which this poem is inscribed, perhaps including the scenic locale within which it has been carefully situated? Or is he pointing to its iconography: the statue of Flavius Secundus, or perhaps the rooster on the top? Or does he actually mean the words inscribed upon the monument: either the *tituli* that mark the names of the family members, or the very poetry that the poet has written? Nor does the poet limit the semantic possibilities of his *imago* to physical and verbal representations. The *blandae rationis imago*, taken literally, is a representation of a process, *ratio*, not a visual object; the phrase may refer to the thinking that lay behind the building of the monument, or indeed to the thought processes that the monument provokes in its viewers. The explanatory lines of poetry that follow continue to blur the line between visual objects and the feelings they arouse. For example, what is the referent of *per quam*: is it the *imago* or the *blanda ratio* that will lead to *memoratio*? Or is it in fact the combined process of an image and the “charming reason” that such an image inspires and is inspired by?

Further confusion over the meaning of the reference to an *imago* results from some unusual features of the inscription itself. It is not quite clear why, or at what point in the building process, the poetry was conceived of as an integral part of the monument’s appearance.<sup>16</sup> The poems are laid out asymmetrically so that they do not fill the whole front of the monument, finishing instead halfway down the third column to leave an expanse of blank wall (see Figure 2). This has led scholars to wonder if the inscription was fitted around another statue, unmentioned in the poem.<sup>17</sup> The ordinators have squeezed lines to fit them into the columns, sometimes using ligatures and crowded lettering. Above all, “H”-shaped marks occur in the left margins at odd points

<sup>16</sup> Force 1993 and Lassère 1993 suggest that the inscription should be dated later than the monument, by as much as 25 years. This requires a significant degree of trust in the methods of dating both the inscription and the monument. Lassère’s analysis focuses on the variable formation of the letters V and Y in the poems on the monument. Both letters, particularly the Y, show curvy arms in some instances on the monument, a flourish that only appears in Italian epigraphy dating toward the last couple of decades of the second century: Lassère finds one of the earliest at Cirta from the end of Marcus Aurelius’s reign. This conflicts with the current architectural dating, which places the construction of the monument round the third quarter of the second century C.E.; see Hallier 1993. See Bing 2009: 207–10 on delayed inscription of epigrammatic poetry more generally.

<sup>17</sup> Devallet 1993: 187. Following Force’s argument in the same volume he hypothesizes an important role for Flavius Secundus’s second wife, Flavia Libera: she could have had the poetry engraved later, fitting it around a statue dedicated to her daughter, who died (according to the *tituli*) aged 15.

during the poem, which look like the *paragraphoi* found on papyrus writings to mark a paragraph break. Instead of interpreting these as instructions to leave a gap at specific points in the poem, the ordinators seem to have simply transferred the marks from a papyrus copy of the poetry directly onto the stone of the monument.

These features of the inscription, combined with its remarkable length, invite some speculation as to whether the poet understood his commission to be epigraphic, that is, expressly designed to play a part in a material structure and to create an immediate visual effect, or whether he conceived of the poems in terms of a more conventional literary tradition, with their inscription coming as an afterthought. In other words, the *imago* may have been something in which the poetry was always designed to participate, or it may initially have been an external object addressed by the poetry. E. Thomas offers a radical reading of the monument's appearance that focuses on the poetry's role in creating the monumental *imago*. He suggests that the peculiarities of the inscription are part of a deliberate attempt by the monument's designers to emphasize and play upon the confusion between architectural and literary influences in its visuals. The inscription directly onto the building's stone (rather than onto a separate plate affixed to its surface) and the unevenness of the layout, particularly with the truncated final column of script, figure the monument as a kind of scroll. The *paragraphoi* further reinforce the impression of a scribal production being synthesized with a stone edifice. Thomas's reading makes ingenious sense of the monument and grants its designers a sophisticated conception of the interplay between text and architecture.

Nonetheless, the poetry on the monument of the Flavii also insists on asserting a notional independence from the building on which it is inscribed. In treating the *imago* as an external object on which it comments, the poem continues to affirm its status as a literary, rather than epigraphic, text, operating within the parameters of a scribal canon. Commentators have noted the remarkable number of marked literary allusions found in these poems, which embrace works by Virgil, Propertius, Ovid, Lucan, Statius, Martial, and Juvenal.<sup>18</sup> The poet is steeped in knowledge of Latin classics, with his most significant debts being to Statius's *Silvae*. The resonances of the *Silvae* are especially intriguing because while they provide evidence of the author's wide reading, they also show that the poet had found a paradigm for his interest in theorizing the relationship between literary poetry and a visual object beyond

<sup>18</sup> Soubiran 1993: 117–19.

the text. Furthermore, the *Silvae* help to shape the terms in which the poet positions himself relative to the commissioner of the work, particularly in a funerary context. In Statius's poetry, the exigencies of patronage are often coextensive with a focus on material objects: Statius can negotiate many difficult angles of encomium by concentrating his poetic praise on a work that is commissioned by the same patron, but independent of both patron and poet. The aggrandizement of that piece confirms simultaneously the greatness of the commissioner, the talent of the poet, and the approval of the community in which they live.<sup>19</sup>

In terms of subject matter, the richest Statian sources for the poet of the Flavii monument are *Silvae* 1.5 and 3.3. Both are addressed to the same patron, Claudius Etruscus; 1.5 congratulates him on the building of a new bath complex, and 3.3 commiserates with him on his father's death. Taken together, the two poems provide a convincing model for the Flavii poet's own two-faceted exercise: to glorify a construction by describing its many visual features, and to celebrate a son's respect for his deceased father.

In *Silvae* 1.5 Statius identifies the power of poetry as the ability to reveal and construct an external image, invoking the "nymphs" of Etruscus's baths (Stat. *Silv.* 1.5.29–30)<sup>20</sup>:

uestrum opus aggredimur, uestra est quam carmine molli  
pando domus.

... yours is the work I attempt, yours the mansion my soft song unfolds.

Even as he celebrates the construction of the monument, in claiming that his poetry *reveals* the building Statius is hinting at the competitive dynamics between verbal and physical construction.<sup>21</sup> As does the poet of the Flavii monument, Statius applauds the patron's wise investment in the building,

<sup>19</sup> Henderson 1998 explores a similar set of dynamics concerning power, writing and Roman communities in his analysis of *Silv.* 1.4, though in this poem the author's praise is focused on an event (Rutillius Gallicus's recovery from illness) rather than a physical object. Henderson supplies the comparandum of a material object by adducing an inscription at Ephesus dedicated to the same man (*ILS* 9499 = *IE* 3.114, no. 715); see below, Section 4. At 112–13 Henderson helpfully connects *Silv.* 1.4 with *Silv.* 1.5, a poem of direct relevance to our discussion, by identifying the latter as a light-hearted literalization of the former's imagery and themes, e.g., turning rivers of inspiration (1.4.27–28, 37) into curative waters.

<sup>20</sup> All text and translations of Statius's *Silvae* are taken from the Loeb edition of Shackleton Bailey 2003.

<sup>21</sup> Newlands 2002: "The lengthy prooemium to *Silv.* 1.5 in particular allows Statius to assert and develop an active, performative role rivalling that of the architect" (211).

introducing scornful comparisons with other places (*Silv.* 1.5.60–63) and using references to exotic luxuries in order to mark out the unusual value of the object of his praise (*Stat. Silv.* 1.5.34–36, 39, 37):

non huc admissae Thasos aut undosa Carystos;  
maeret onyx longe queriturque exclusus ophites:  
sola nitet flauis Nomadum decisa metallis  
quoique Tyri liuens fleat et Sidonia, rupes,  
purpura.

Not Thasos or wavy Carystos are admitted here, alabaster sulks afar, serpentine grumbles in exclusion; [here] shines only stone hewn from Numidia's yellow quarries and that other [porphyry] at which Tyre's and Sidon's purple would weep for envy.

Above all, Statius associates the visually observable ageing of the building with the lasting life of the man who built it, addressing Claudius directly for the first time in the last couplet: *tecum ista senescant* ("let all this grow old along with you," 64). The poet of the Flavii will replicate this *topos* in his own final advice to the younger Flavius Secundus (B 19–20):

Opto, Secunde, geras multos feliciter annos,  
et quae fecisti tu monumenta legas.

I hope, Secundus, that you live happily for many years, and that you read the monument that you yourself made.

Statius's consolation to the same man over the death of his father has been even more frequently connected with the inscription on the Flavii monument,<sup>22</sup> because it encodes and praises the father-son relationship in similar terms, starting from its first dramatic invocation of *Pietas* (*Stat. Silv.* 3.3.1, 6–7):

summa deum, Pietas ...  
mitibus exsequiis ades et lugentis Etrusci  
cerne pios fletus.

Piety, highest among deities ...

Come to a gentle funeral and behold the pious tears of sorrowing Etruscus.

In many other respects, this poem sets up a range of dynamics also found in the poetry on the monument of the Flavii. It emphasizes the action of the son more than the life of the father; the father appears only to respond to his

<sup>22</sup> Devallet 1993.



son's behavior: *felix heu, nimium felix plorataque nato / umbra uenit* ("happy, oh too happy, comes the shade, mourned by a son," *Silv.* 3.3.25–26). Statius describes his poetry's capacity to confer immortality not so much upon the father himself, as upon the relationship between the son and the father: *me monstrante* ("as I portray it," 39). The relationship between poet and patron is further highlighted by the poet's ventriloquizing of Claudius Etruscus's lament for his father. In this passage the bereaved son, describing himself as *semper secundus*, comments on the physical representation of his father among the *imagines* of the family house (198–202):

ego rite minor semperque secundus  
assiduas libabo dapes et pocula sacris  
manibus effigiesque colam; te lucida saxa,  
te similem doctae referet modo linea cerae,  
nunc ebur et fuluum uultus imitabitur aurum.

Rightfully beneath you, always in second place, I shall offer meat and drink to your sacred spirit and worship your images. Now shining stone and line of cunning wax shall bring you back in semblance; now ivory and tawny gold shall imitate your countenance.

Finally, at the end of this poem Statius turns to ponder the tomb of the elder Claudius Etruscus. With his last couplet, Statius once again aligns his poetic production, *nostra carmina*, with a material construction, *hoc sepulchro* (215–16):

nostra quoque, exemplo meritus, tibi carmina sancit,  
hoc etiam gaudens cinerem donasse sepulchro.

My song too that he has earned by his example he dedicates to you, happy to have given this sepulchre also to your ashes.

Statius's association of his text with a material object beyond his poetry is a descriptive exercise in *Silvae* 1.5, and a figurative flourish at the end of *Silvae* 3.3. He plays with epigrammatic and ekphrastic techniques that link a text to a specific site, but in no case, to the best of our knowledge, is his poetry designed to be physically embedded in the object to which it refers.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> On Statius's expansion of epigrammatic ekphrastic techniques, see Newlands 2002: 38–43, and see Bodel 1997: 16–17 on the "architectural ekphrases" of Statius, Martial, and Pliny more generally. Henderson 2002 explores Pliny's ekphrastic writing ("carving out a niche for himself in Roman letters," 1), focusing on the letter in which Pliny describes the statue he has purchased for dedication in his name (*Ep.* 3.6).

The descriptive elements of his poetry are designed to reconstruct the image in the mind's eye of his readers, rather than to replicate in words an object that is already in front of them. It is all the more striking, then, that Statius's tone, vocabulary, and the way in which he discusses human interactions in relation to a concrete image are all elements that can also be found in the poetry inscribed directly into the stone monument of the Flavii. This poet has mimicked Statius's take on an external object such that it is possible to read his poetry in the same way as Statius's poetry is and was read: as a purely literary artifact, circulating independently of the physical *imago* to which it alludes. Yet in its inscription upon the very object it celebrates the poem also literalizes the moments where Statius conceives of his text as a version of the monuments he describes. In its ambiguous reference to an *imago* that may or may not include its own words, the inscribed poetry of the Flavii stages an even more overt confrontation between the powers of visual reality and those of verbal representation.

#### 4. VIEWING THE *IMAGO*: VIRTUAL/REALITY

One scholar says of Statius's poetry that the author "offers his eyes for the public to see with" (Damon 2002: 183). Statius uses the illusion of his own presence to bring an absent audience into communion with the object praised, knowing that it is only in the act of viewing that a visual object, real or virtual, gains meaning. And as Fowler points out: "Nothing is more changeable than the meaning of a monument" (2000: 206).<sup>24</sup> The poetry on the monument of the Flavii also reveals an understanding of the way in which the messages projected by a monument are ultimately dependent upon their reception by a specific audience at a specific time or place. We have seen how *imago* is an ambiguous term that is used to play with different ideas about what the monument is considered to be or do. It underlines the potentially competitive relationship between the physical monument and the words inscribed upon it (or about it), even as it also allows for the possibility of a complementary (and complimentary) relationship between the two. In all of this, the various social and aesthetic goals of the mausoleum are mediated and ultimately guaranteed by the viewer, the interpreting reader of the monument's binary features.

<sup>24</sup>Fowler continues by spelling out the relationship between text and monument, with reference to Varro, Propertius in his fourth book of elegies, and Ovid in his *Fasti*: "It is the task of the guidebook and the tour guide to explain the monuments to us and to attempt to bring them into operation as reminders" (2000: 206). On the stability and changeability of monuments and their meanings, see also Alcock 2002: 28.

In recent years the role of the viewer has been given considerable space in the scholarship of epigraphists, historians, and literary critics who are interested in the interactions between texts and buildings.<sup>25</sup> MacMullen's redefinition of epigraphy as always displaying "a sense of audience" has inspired several productive lines of argument, all of which engage with epigraphic writing's twofold visual effect as both text and material object (MacMullen 1982, discussed closely by both Meyer 1990 and Woolf 1996). Woolf, in particular, takes from MacMullen the notion that epigraphy may be glossed as "monumental writing," with the adjective referring not so much to the object on which the writing was inscribed, but to a fundamental aspect of the inscription itself (1996: 24). As public writing, inscription *is* a monument in its own right. Viewed in the context of the building on which it is inscribed, it becomes part of a twofold phenomenon. So, for example, Woolf describes inscribed statues as composed of two media, text and image, which work together "both to expand and to circumscribe the representation in question: the statue confirms and illustrates the text and draws attention to it, while the text directs the reader to a particular appreciation or view of the statue" (1996: 28). The two media cooperate in order to ensure the most comprehensive response from the viewer, who thus engages in a double viewing process. Henderson essentially agrees that the combination of image and epigraphy releases "interactive, symbiotic, dialectical energy," although he resists the notion that text is ultimately any more precise or more focused on identity than visual art (2002: 176–77). The discussion is further developed by E. Thomas, who produces his definition of "monumentality" from a similar appreciation of the "sense of audience" contained within epigraphic works, but extends the notion to embrace buildings without words inscribed on them. For Thomas, the active viewer creates what he calls "mental buildings": these are constructed from the interactive relationship between the "social language" of a monument and the response of an individual viewer, who creates the real monumentality through the application of his or her interpretative imagination.<sup>26</sup> Though Thomas applies this notion to uninscribed buildings, it also informs his approach to the textual aspect of the mausoleum of the Flavii,

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., Goldhill and Osborne, eds. 1994; Elsner 1995; Elsner, ed. 1996; Henderson 1998; E. Thomas 2007; Newby and Leader-Newby, eds. 2007; Webb 2009.

<sup>26</sup> E. Thomas 2007: 1–14: "In the ancient world, buildings were not only a backdrop and setting for social interaction but also a form of social language. This language had meaning not just for the professional group who constructed those buildings, but for the whole population who experienced them" (1). See also Laird 1996: 89 on *pictura* as "mental image."

in which he wonders “whether the conceptual monument presented by the poems is perhaps more important architecturally than the real one on the ground” (2007: 200).<sup>27</sup> Henderson exposes a similar effect resulting from the collusion between word and image on Rutilius Gallicus’s inscribed statue-base: “we look up (literally and metaphorically) to Gallicus in stone” (1998: 14).

This recognition that what is “seen” is really a virtual image that is the product of an individual’s imaginative response to any visual stimuli, whether textual or architectural, suggests that words and material images can be understood to operate in surprisingly similar ways.<sup>28</sup> In this sense contemporary approaches to the different visual aspects of monuments embrace the very same ambiguity as that signaled by the vagueness of the term *imago* on the monument of the Flavii itself. Moreover, these recent approaches emphasize that the power of such virtual constructions will always depend upon the idiosyncratic responses of individual viewers. It is the attempt to direct the mental images of individuals—the images that provide the ultimate guarantee of the goals of the “real” monument—that prompts the poet’s appeals to viewers in the poetry on the mausoleum of the Flavii.

From the beginning of the poem the viewer is asked to act as approver of the monumental enterprise, both as an individual and as a member of a wider social group. What is surprising is not just the variety of approaches the poet makes to his viewer, but the fact that he engages with a viewer whose identity shifts at different points during the poems.<sup>29</sup> After first invoking a general audience, the poet addresses as if present a wide array of characters: Flavius Secundus (the younger, the commissioner of the monument), the Muse Calliope (the inspirer of epic, who is disconcertingly glossed as his *ebria Musa*), the personification of *Pietas*, as well as an impossible-to-identify “you.” The poet begins obliquely, hinting at the general approval the project is bound to receive (A 9–10, 13–16):

Ecce recens pietas omni placitura fauore  
ingentem famae numerum cum laude meretur

<sup>27</sup> Similarly Bodel 1997: 6, explaining his use of the term “monumental” to describe a building’s effect, rather than its physical features: “it is not size or an imposing appearance that are relevant here but rather the phenomenon of commemoration.”

<sup>28</sup> Laird 1996 also addresses this in his delicate construction of the relationship between verbal and visual arts in the ancient world. The “virtual object” of literary epigram is described by Livingstone and Nisbet 2010: 22.

<sup>29</sup> Feldherr 2000 finds the same multiplicity of audiences (and speakers) in Catullus 101, another poem that bridges the textual and the monumental, and relates this to the ritual features underpinning the poem’s construction and function.

...

Quis non iam pronis animi uirtutibus adsit,  
 quis non hoc miretur opus fusasq(ue) uidendo  
 diuitias stupeat tantos se cernere census  
 per quos aetherias surgunt monimenta per auras?

Look! An act of piety, bound to please everyone, which deserves a huge amount of fame and praise ... Who could ever be in its presence without the noble qualities of his mind fully supportive; who would not marvel at this work and, in seeing the riches poured into it, stand astonished to observe such expense, by means of which the monument rears up through the heavenly breezes?

The possibility that the poet is addressing *Pietas* herself here at the beginning of the poem (in anticipation of the later address to *Pietas* at the beginning of the second poem) is only dispelled by a displaced third-person verb: *meretur*. At this point it becomes clear that a generalized approval is being expected of the viewers of the physical monument, those to whom the imperative *ecce* is addressed. As the poet continues, this abstract viewer coalesces into, or is replaced by, any person who happens to be on the spot (*quis ... adsit*) and who by virtue of his very presence must be forced into an attitude of admiration (*miretur, stupeat*) caused by observing what is in front of him (*uidendo, cernere*).

The presence of a viewer, or at least the staging of such a presence, proves to be vitally important to the author of the poems. *Ecce* is used several times in the first poem, to dramatic effect. After this first appearance, in which it directs attention to the piety lying behind the monument, it is used again to mark a feature of the monument itself, when the poet draws the viewer's gaze to the little skylights that allow bees to make their nests (A 86–90). More strikingly, it is used to mark the presence of the two mortal protagonists behind the construction of the monument, the commissioner and his father, and to portray them both as critical viewers. In a mystic turn, the poet suggests that the monument's visual attractions can even draw the elder Flavius Secundus out of the underworld and into the area of the mausoleum itself (see Section 6 below). The poet addresses the younger Flavius Secundus on this topic, pointing with another deictic *ecce* to the incorporeal presence of his dead father (A 55–61). In this passage the father sees the monument and expresses his satisfaction at its appearance by remaining present, while the younger is invited to visualize his father's contented presence at the tomb.

Later, at the beginning of the second poem, the poet seems to refer back to this paternal spiritual presence: *ecce Secundus adest iterum* (B 3). He implies for a moment that the father has returned, before revealing that it is the son

who has made his presence felt once again, demanding another poem: the poet is playing on the shared name of father and son as well as punning on the meaning of “Secundus” in the context of a “second” poem dedicated to a “second” Flavius Secundus.<sup>30</sup> The *ecce* is therefore more exclamatory, directed once again to a hypothetical third party that is asked to bear witness not to the son’s presence in front of the monument, but to his attendance upon the poet and his concern regarding the poetry that he is commissioning. The younger is now presented as a viewer who is expressing his dissatisfaction with the poetry’s description of the monument: his own powers of observation lead him to find fault with the perspective offered by the poet in the first poem.

The inspection works in the opposite direction too. Both father and son are viewers who are themselves viewed: every process of observation that they undertake is itself focalized through the vividly descriptive lens of the poet. The unspecified external readers-as-viewers are being asked to construct the presence of these men through their imagination, as it is stimulated by the poetry. In fact, by the time the poetry is read by the general audience addressed in the first lines, the specific family members’ own acts of viewing, as they are tied to the physical monument, are clearly relegated to the realms of the past, or the fictional, or mystic. Those moments of particular people interacting with a particular place are granted validity by an imaginative audience that recreates the moments. These new audience members are envisioning a scenario constructed around the monument, rather than simply viewing the actual building in front of them.

All the viewers of the *imago* considered thus far are (or were) mortal, whether they are named characters within the poetry or unspecified passers-by, and their different acts of observation are all mobilized toward approving the construction of the monument. There is also a reference to another kind of viewer with a different function. After confidently noting that widespread approval for Flavius Secundus’s act of piety is inevitable, the poet goes on to indicate the way in which the monument may act as a kind of example that will be “seen” by the abstract notions of *furor*, “madness,” and *gloria luxuriae*, “pride in extravagance”: *uiderit ille furor, nimio qui ducitur auro ... uiderit et fusae uanis in amoribus errans / gloria luxuriae* (“let the madness that is incited by too much gold see this ... and let the reckless pride in extravagance poured out on empty desires see it too,” A 21, 23–24). The piety demonstrated by Flavius Secundus toward his father is pitted against a greedy passion devoted to expense on luxuries, a passion that responds anthropomorphically to the

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Stat. *Silv.* 3.3.198 (quoted above) and 1.4.69 with Henderson 1998: 16, 82.

“vision” of more modest behavior. Warming to his theme, the poet dwells on increasingly alien (and occasionally obscure) purchases to illustrate this *furor* and *gloria luxuriae*. From foreign clothes (*peregrinas uestes*, A 24–25), jewels and gifts from across the Red Sea, he progresses to specifics: slave boys from Greece, olive oil (*Pallados usu*, A 28) from Spain, beasts for hunting from Libya, perfume from the East, “frivolity” from the Pharos of Egypt (*Phariis leuitatibus*, A 30), artisan work from Gaul, and wine from Campania. This global span parades the poet’s worldly knowledge, but his moral rejection of this grasping for imported possessions implicitly celebrates the value of domestic display in the face of wide-reaching dissipation, and suggests that such dissipation may learn from observing at close quarters the representation of local piety.

The startling shifts and zooming perspectives created by the monument’s visuals resume a global dimension when the poet addresses the monument’s height. The building’s lofty dimensions are marked as important from the start: *aetherias surgunt monimenta per auras* (A 16). Later the poet describes how those present at the monument of the Flavii desire to measure the man-made object immediately in front of them against the natural setting that frames it. Here the viewers are, in yet another shift of approach, described in the second person and located at the site of the physical monument, although this direct address is impossible to ascribe to any particular viewer (A 79–81):

Si iungere montes  
forte uelint oculi, uincuntur in ordine colles;  
si uideas campos, infra iacet abdita tellus.

If by chance your eyes should wish to survey the mountains, the summits are conquered, one by one; if you should look to the plain, the ground lies hidden below.

As the land behind the monument lies vanquished, so are the global comparanda the poet adduces at some length to prove his point.<sup>31</sup> Not so impressive, apparently, is the Colossus (the vast statue of Nero erected in the *domus aurea*) in its attempt to rise above the hills of Rome, nor the obelisk (in the Circus Maximus), nor the Alexandrian Pharos.<sup>32</sup> Again, there is virtue in the immediate visual effect of the mausoleum, a value that is marked by its

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Stat. *Silv.* 4.2.20, 30–31 with Soubiran 1993 ad loc.

<sup>32</sup> For an intriguing investigation into whether the Pharos was itself inscribed with an epigram on its own construction, see Bing 2009: 194–216, reading Posidippus 11 Gow-Page (= 115 Austin-Bastianini). For the Colossus (in Suet. *Nero* 31.1 and Dio 65.16.1),

contrast with exotic but negative comparanda from across the Roman Empire, and comparanda that are merely quoted at that (*dicitur*, A 83), not witnessed by either the poet or the viewers of the monument in Cillium. The poetry privileges the perspective of viewers on the spot, from which position the monument is perceived to soar above its native setting as well as to trounce all other imaginable examples of lofty construction.<sup>33</sup> The poetry's emphasis on the monument's height may be responding to Punic spiritual beliefs (see Section 5), but it also relates to viewers' experience of the monument in virtual terms.<sup>34</sup> The horizontal plane requires, or implies, "real" travel: it is a dimension that can be physically traversed and measured, locally or globally, by the poet or by the viewers of the monument. The vertical is metaphysical: it is a dimension that can be explored only by the eyes, following its reach upwards, and by the imagination, following the lead of the descriptive texts.

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see Coleman 1998 and her discussion of its representation in Mart. *Spect.* 2.1–2: *hic ubi sidereus propius uidet astra colossus / et crescunt media pegmata celsa via* ("where the starry colossus sees the constellations at close range and lofty scaffolding rises in the middle of the road"; trans. Shackleton Bailey 1993).

<sup>33</sup> On the setting of a monument within a landscape and "a community's longitudinal relationship to a particular locale," see Alcock 2002: 30.

<sup>34</sup> The Flavii monument is not the only building to champion its height. Hitchner 1995: 496 marks the importance of mausoleum height as a status signifier in African society: "the tower-mausoleum ... had the effect by virtue of its height and permanence of apotheosizing the interred while simultaneously reinforcing the status and dynastic pretensions of the deceased's family." Pikhaus 1993: 150 points out that the early nineteenth-century visitors to Cillium found and recorded traces of another long verse inscription (now destroyed) on the other remaining monument in the town, that of the Petronii (*CLE* 450 = *CIL* 8.217–18). This also emphasized the monument's height, as the text is reconstructed by Wilmanns in the *CIL*:

Tu ni sc[i]s, quantis uita[m d]uxerit annis,  
A me non discas: titulu[s ti]bi ta[l]ia dicat  
Voci praepositus no[st]r[us] ae, [q]ui desuper instat.  
Inde tibi si forte lib[er] [et pe]rcurrere cuncta,  
Aspice, dicemus, [q]ui am celso uertice moles  
Intulit in nubem [caput et quam proxima] caelo  
Ut soli data d – v v – v v – us in u[bi]num]

This poem also foregrounds the relationship between a first-person poet and a second-person reader, showing a tension between voice, text, and monument that is not dissimilar to that found on the mausoleum of the Flavii, particularly in lines 2–3. It is hard to envisage this as a freestanding poem, and it is therefore strong evidence for a local tradition of lengthy poetry designed for epitaphic inscription. On this poem, see also Adams 1999: 127.



The poet and other viewers may be bodily rooted to the ground at the foot of the monument, but their upward gaze transcends the monument and takes them into the realms of the imaginary.

## 5. VOCALIZING THE *IMAGO*: FROM *DESCRIPTIO* TO *EKPHRASIS*

The poetry on the mausoleum of the Flavii revels in the paradox lying behind its existence: as a text inscribed on the monument it is not only descriptive, but it is also the object of its own description. The poet makes clear the fact that he is transforming a scene into words, even as he invites viewers to use those words to reconstruct the very scene in which the inscribed words of the poetry can be found. The tension between these two dynamic processes may be loosely defined as the difference between *descriptio*, “written, drawn representation,” that is, the *fixing* of a living scene in text, and *ekphrasis*, “language that brings the subject before the eyes,” that is, the *evocation* (“calling forth”) of a living scene from a text.<sup>35</sup>

Behind the terms *descriptio* and *ekphrasis* lie etymologized the complementary functions of writing and speech, and the difference between these two modes of communicating is thematized by the poetry on the monument. Different speakers, especially the poet himself, are portrayed as responding vocally to the building. Meanwhile the written inscription records this speech so that the voices are sustained even in the original speaker’s absence. The result is that the conceptual functions of *descriptio* and *ekphrasis* are themselves multilayered, encompassing an array of different spoken and written responses to the monument. As a *descriptio* the poetry inscribes in words the visual features of the monument, while it also embeds the poet’s voice (among others), expressing its first impressions at the scene.<sup>36</sup> In turn, the process of reading, of allowing the *ekphrasis* to sing out, becomes one in which the

<sup>35</sup> See Laird 1996: 92–93 and Webb 2009: 14. A starting point for discussion on this topic is often Theon, *Progymnasmata* 118.7–9: ἔκφρασις ἐστὶ λόγος περιγηματικὸς ἐναργῶς ὑπ’ ὄψιν ἄγων τὸ δηλούμενον. γίνεται δὲ ἔκφρασις προσώπων τε καὶ πραγμάτων καὶ τόπων καὶ χρόνων (“Ekphrasis is descriptive language that brings the item being revealed vividly before the eyes. There can be ekphrasis of persons as well as of events and places and times”). See also Elsner 2002, who makes an important distinction between the modern understanding of *ekphrasis* as a vivid description of art objects, and the ancient use of the term to mean vivid description more generally, even while ancient critics recognize descriptions of art objects as a defined and significant subset of *ekphrasis*. On *ekphrasis* etymologized as “speaking out,” see Steiner 2001: 299.

<sup>36</sup> On the poet as “viewing subject” in Hellenistic epigram, see Goldhill 1994: 205 and Gutzwiller 2002: 86.

visual *imago* of the monument is reconstructed at the same time as the aural *imago* of the poet's praising voice. The reader fulfills the ekphrastic purpose of the poem by finding in its words the evocation of an artwork as well as a speaking commentary on that artwork, in a kind of audio-visual doubling.

The poetry iterates words carefully composed or spontaneously uttered in response to the monument on specific occasions. The poet's quotation of, or reference to, these earlier words as part of his own creation suggests that the monument is constituted through individual viewers' reviewing a range of spoken and written impressions. This layering of responses then configures each new viewer as part of the tradition. One example of this glossing of one response by another comes in the written domain when the poems refer to the *tituli*, the names and details of the family inscribed on the upper level of the mausoleum, and the most explicit form of writing connected with the monument.<sup>37</sup> The poetry begins (A 8) and ends (B 18) with a reference to these *tituli*, providing a thematic ring-composition that connects the poetry to other inscriptional writing, other parts of the monument that are also articulations of the building's meaning.<sup>38</sup>

An even more marked example of multiplicity in written responses to the monument can be found in the second poem's commentary on the first poem. Taken together, the two poems add up to 110 lines, the same number of lines as the purported age of Flavius Secundus, the commissioner's father, when he died.<sup>39</sup> This suggests that the poems were conceived of as a single unit, as does the fact that there is no break between the poems in their inscription.

<sup>37</sup> A less overt but even more suggestive reference to writing may be found in the first poem. When the poet describes the details of the monument, one of the attractions for the crowd is the statuary: *mobilibus signis hilaris sculptura n[ou]a[t]ur* (A 46). The "cheerful sculpture" is "renewed" (reviewed and reconstructed) by what are described as "mobile markings." This could refer to elements of the sculpture itself, but it also makes sense taken as a reference to the descriptive words whose doubling of the physical features of the building give those features fresh meaning (Soubiran 1993: 79–80; Devallet 1993:188, identifying the markings with the *tituli*).

<sup>38</sup> Henderson 2002: 161–64 offers a neat corollary to this partnership between literary text and *titulus* in his discussion of Plin. *Ep.* 3.6. In this letter Pliny combines his ekphrastic description of the statue he has bought with a request that his addressee think up and commission a *titulus* with Pliny's name and honors.

<sup>39</sup> Mattingly and Hitchner 1995: 174 note that for North Africa "the published studies seem to indicate far higher levels of infant mortality and far shorter adult life-spans than the epigraphic material suggests." E. Thomas 2007 argues that the coincidence of the father's age and the number of lines in the poems proves that the poems were designed for inscription on the monument.

Nonetheless, the poet clearly begins for a second time in the opening lines of the second poem, marking the new beginning with a shift of tone, focus and, above all, meter.

The first poem is composed in hexameters, the conventional meter of epic that can be so jarringly portentous when turned to other purposes (satire, occasional poetry). The decision to dignify the first poem with this meter is highlighted by the sudden move into elegiac couplets in the second poem. Elegy introduces (or underlines) a note of parody: as Morgan notes, it always has the capacity “to adopt a responsive or even adversarial role” (2010: 362).<sup>40</sup> The presence of the Muse of epic, Calliope, in the second elegiac poem (B 5), adds to the sense of discordance, just as her invocation does in Propertius 4.6.12.<sup>41</sup> The Calliope of the Flavii monument is bizarrely *ebria*, and full of jokes (*multos ... iocos*, B11). Indeed, in throwing the “epic” first poem into relief, the elegiac poem demonstrates its own style and character. With its strongly marked couplets, the second poem invites readers to listen for the more subjective tone normally found in elegiac poetry. The first person, the poet himself, gains a stronger voice even though the poem is essentially a defensive response to the commissioner. In addition to this, since elegy is a meter more often used for inscription than hexameter, the second poem brings the reader back to the poetry’s function *qua* inscription. And at twenty lines this epigrammatic coda is certainly of a much more appropriate length for an inscription than the first poem.

Nonetheless, this tumbling together of modes in the movement from one poem to another still takes a cue from literary anthologizing. Statius’s *Silvae* once again offer instructive parallels. Henderson points out that the metrical *variatio* in the first book of the *Silvae*, particularly taken in conjunction with the prose preface, grants the reader a sense of the individual poems’ relationship to separate occasions even as they are bound together as a collection (1998: 102–7). The shifts in meter encourage the readers to feel that they can revisit the words from different angles: “Readers of the book can move back

<sup>40</sup> Morgan 2010 explores the tension between the hexameter as the meter for epic and its parodic opposite, satire, and also identifies Statius’s discomfort when fitting the meter to his occasional purposes in the *Silvae* (360).

<sup>41</sup> Her presence in Propertius is noted by Morgan 2010: 371–72, who makes the additional point that Calliope appears in the pentameter of the couplet. In the Flavii poem she appears in the hexameter, but in a line that refers to a *gemino ... limite* that might well be identified with the elegiac couplet. Propertius 4.6 resonates further with the poems on the Flavii monument as its uncomfortable balancing act between epic topoi and elegiac meter is also directed toward the praise of a monument: the temple of Palatine Apollo dedicated by Augustus in 28 B.C.E.

and forth between reading the poems as re-presentations of the occasions that motivated their composition, and reading the poems re-motivated as Statius's offering to his reading public" (Henderson 1998: 102). Similarly, while the two poems on the Flavii monument offer a jarring juxtaposition of *epos* and epigram, scroll and inscription, the poet's two responses to his commission are still bound together into one unified, bookish experience for his readers.

In these portrayals of revised acts of writing, the poet again plays with the issue of presence at the site of the monument, an issue that takes him from themes of writing to themes of voice. In self-conscious remarks on beginning a second poem, the poet complains (B 5–10):

Quo nunc, Calliope, gemino me limite cogis,  
 quas iam transegi, rusus adire uias?  
 Nempe fuit nobis operis descriptio magni,  
 diximus et iunctis saxa polita locis,  
 circuitus nemorum, currentes dulciter undas  
 atque reportantes m[ell]a frequenter apes.

To what end are you now forcing me, Calliope, on a twin route, to go once again down roads I have already traveled? Surely I made a description of the great work, and I mentioned the stones polished in their fitted spots, the surrounding groves, the waters rushing peacefully and the bees regularly bringing back honey.

The poet's presence at the scene of the monument becomes a requirement for the composition of the second poem. Or, rather, the composition of the second poem forces the poet to create the illusion of presence at a place he has already visited, and to do so he uses language whose imagery of journeying is also a metapoetic comment on returning to previous poetic themes, as compared with the "untrodden paths" that mark poetic originality. These themes even stretch to encompass the *uaga turba* (A 47), the viewers and readers who do their own "traveling" in relation to the monument.<sup>42</sup>

Presence becomes more important still when the poet moves away from re-writing writing, and turns instead to express the voices lying behind the mausoleum. This includes the voices of the monument (found in its sculpture, its material imagery) as well as the voices of those who interact with it (its inhabitants, commissioners, casual viewers, and the poet himself). The first

<sup>42</sup> To these dynamics of static text with moving artist and audience we might compare the inverse situation found in epistolography, where texts generally move more freely than their readers and writers. Another related model is that of *periegesis*, in which the writer is mobile while the reader is static, and the text travels from the mobile writer to the static reader.

poem introduces the theme: so, for example, when the author compares the mausoleum of the Flavii with monuments in Rome and in Alexandria, he is careful to add the impersonal *dicitur* (A 83) to his descriptions of the more famous buildings.<sup>43</sup> This anonymous speech both exempts the poet from needing to substantiate his own presence at those global monuments, and keeps the focus firmly on his presence at the site of the monument currently being praised. Elsewhere in the first poem another unplaced speaking community is swiftly dismissed when it expresses suspicion over monuments destined for still-living family members; the poet calls its speech “empty chatter,” *uano sermone* (A 62).

It is the process of repeatedly rehearsing the monuments’ features that encourages the poet to evoke the spoken exchanges between the monument and its first viewers. Even in the first poem, when he circles back to resume his description of the building, he does so in response to the monument’s voice “calling” him: *sed reuocat me cura operis celsiq(ue) decores* (A 77).<sup>44</sup> But it is in the reprise offered by the second poem that the poet really focuses on the voices behind the mausoleum. The poet begins by claiming that the second poem is a result of Secundus’s asking him to correct an omission in the first poem. The personification of *Pietas* is then invoked to favor this second composition, which is now described as one of the poet’s *carmina*, the conventional term that characterizes poetry in terms of its sung origins (Habinek 2005, esp. 74–82). The poet insists that in the first poem he had produced a *descriptio* of the mausoleum. But when he goes into the details about this, the *-scriptio* becomes *-phrasis*: *diximus* (B 8), he writes, recounting the important features of the first poem; then, at B 13, he admits that he did not mention the rooster on the top: *non diximus*.

It is in the rooster that the monument gains its most remarkable voice. This is the very part of the monument that the younger Flavius Secundus had found missing in the first poem. The mimetic verisimilitude of this animal sculpture encourages the poet, either under Secundus’s instruction or following his own inclination, to speculate on the power of the voice the rooster might utter (B 13–16):

<sup>43</sup> Laird 1996: 80 discusses a similar use of *credas* in ekphrastic writings, taking the shield of Aeneas (esp. Verg. *Aen.* 8.691–93) as a case study.

<sup>44</sup> For a skeptical view of ancient authors’ interest in the “speaking” of inscribed monuments, see Bing 2009: 126–27 (“our sources bespeak ... a pervasive indifference”), arguing against Svenbro 1993: 47 and Depew 1997: 239, 245.

in summo tremulas galli non diximus alas,  
altior extrema qui, puto, nube uolat.  
Cuius si membris uocem natura dedisset,  
cogeret hic omnes surgere mane deos.

I did not tell of the trembling wings of the rooster on the top, which, I think, flies above the highest cloud. If nature had given a voice to the body of this rooster, it would force all the gods to wake up in the morning.

The stone sculpture has been given a real voice: not inscribed words, but actual sound. But, of course, attention is drawn to this “sound” only through the poetry that Secundus had insisted should describe (or rather, “ekphrase”) the rooster. This particular voice, one that is technically part of the monument rather than a response to it, still has to be constructed by the poet and his audience. Their writing and reading collaborates in imaginatively creating the sound of the bird’s voice. Meanwhile, it is telling that the rooster’s voice is contingent upon a contrary-to-fact conditional: nature (or rather, sculpture) has *not* given the rooster a real voice. The poet does not shy away from acknowledging the fact that this voice is entirely the product of the poetry and the imaginative response it inspires in its readers. As Laird points out, “The more an ekphrasis mentions the material of the visual medium (wood, marble, stone) or, as is more usual, the verisimilar quality of the visual artwork, the less readers are allowed to succumb to the illusion of the story in the picture. As language draws attention to the medium of the art-work, it also draws attention to *itself* as a medium.” (1996: 86).<sup>45</sup> In the case of the Flavii rooster the poet draws attention to the way in which his poem supplies not just an image, but also a voice that neither nature nor sculpture can grant. The compliment to the lifelike statue is ultimately backhanded, and the failure of the stone is rectified by the audience’s response to the poetry. But this aggressive promotion of the poetry is softened by being predicated upon the poet’s apparently accidental failure to apply his own descriptive vocal abilities in the previous poem: *non diximus*.

The rooster also brings into play another problematic issue, which further complicates the dichotomy between voiced and inscribed text. The elegiac second poem’s flippant tone, particularly noticeable when addressing the rooster, may demonstrate a difference between the attitudes of the poet and the patron toward the iconography of the monument.<sup>46</sup> The poet’s decision

<sup>45</sup> A classic example is, of course, the *ekphrasis* in Catullus 64. As Elsner 2002: 4 notes, the development of *ekphrasis* as a literary tool is also “an increasingly complex device for authorial self-reflection on how readers might relate to the text.”

<sup>46</sup> On this mocking tone as another reason why the poem may not initially have been inscribed on the monument, see Devallet 1993: 188 and Pikhaus 1993: 143n31.

to characterize the mausoleum as a temple, rather than a monument (*non monimenta patri, sed noua templa dedit*, B 4), verges on the over-fulsome, even mocking, after the praise of the monument *qua* monument in the first. This impression is reinforced by the dissonance between the Greco-Roman imagery of the poem and the Punic architecture of the monument, which is evident in the final description of the rooster. This image is still accepted by some scholars as the single example of a weathercock in ancient Roman culture.<sup>47</sup> Scholars working on North-African Punic culture, however, have convincingly argued that it represents a Punic symbol of life after death, and that the poet's irreverent attitude toward the rooster's role on the monument demonstrates a conflict between the cultural beliefs of the commissioners of the monument and those of the poet.<sup>48</sup> Overlap between Roman and Punic culture is not unique to the mausoleum of the Flavii, and several monuments display this overtly through bilingual Punic and Latin inscriptions.<sup>49</sup> In the case of Flavius Secundus's monument, the bilingualism consists of Libyco-Punic iconography matched with exceptionally fluent Latin (even interlarded with the Greek learning fashionable in Flavian poetry<sup>50</sup>), a combination that

<sup>47</sup> Courtney 1995: 400, 403 and E. Thomas 2007, following Bücheler in the *CLE*, argue for the weathervane.

<sup>48</sup> Peyras and Bessi, in particular, adduce several other iconographic images of the rooster in North African funerary monuments, all of which appear to represent the passage of the astral soul (*ruah*) to the fortified city in the sky, while the vegetative soul (*nephesh*) stays in its mausoleum. This might provide another reason for the poet's emphasis on the vertical plane of the monument in the poems, for the Punic viewer is encouraged to celebrate the movement of the *ruah* up into the sky. See Peyras 1993 and Bessi (unpublished), following Fantar 1970, who has a striking image of the rooster/soul on the walls of a tomb in Jebel Meleza (Plate XXIV). Fantar 1970: 36–37 argues that the series of paintings illustrates the soul approaching the mausoleum and dwelling in it for an unspecified length of time (during which the family of the dead may have been expected to perform a series of set rituals), before finally moving on to a more permanent rest in the eternal city. This claim is modified by Camps 1992, who argues that the rooster stands only as a guardian of the dead.

<sup>49</sup> See Adams 2003: 213–45. Adams notes the enduring vitality of Punic language and culture in Africa despite Roman colonization, without identifying this as a sign of anti-Roman resistance: "The bilingual inscriptions reveal tell-tale signs of a developing sense of a double identity among Punic speakers, who remained African but were sometimes concerned to present themselves as Roman as well" (213). Adams points out that this often made translation between Punic and Latin redundant; different languages were appropriate for different contexts and statements, so bilingual inscriptions often express one sentiment in one language, and another sentiment in another. In the case of the Flavii mausoleum, the Punic architecture is a different language from that of the inscribed Latin text and represents a different set of assumptions about the monument's role.

<sup>50</sup> The Greek inflections come through partly in the arcane details such as the names of the Fates, but also in the poet's use of Greek forms ending in -os. See Soubiran 1993: 113.

creates occasional moments of dissonance. The engagement between different cultures on the Flavii mausoleum, then, is negotiated through the poet's application of a veneer of descriptive Latin language to the architectural language of the monument. In this the poet is providing yet one further layer of interpretation to a monument already composed of multiple strata of responses, written and oral, and invitations to reconstruct those responses.<sup>51</sup>

## 6. FROM *IMAGO* TO *MEMORATIO*: PERFORMING IMMORTALITY

Despite the previous sections' arguments that the many layers of description and interpretation are as much a part of the monument of the Flavii mausoleum as the stones of the building itself, the mausoleum is much more than simply a self-conscious exercise in meta-monumentality. Poets, patrons, viewer, and readers are encouraged to apply their *ratio* to the mausoleum for a reason: for the purpose of commemoration. The poet's careful investigation of the different kinds of *imago* is part of his broader commission, his need to make explicit the commemorative goal of the monument and to highlight the role of its architects and its audience in achieving that goal. The whole point of the *blandae rationis imago* (A 5) is to guarantee a *longior ... memoratio* (A 7). As such, the mausoleum engages as boldly with its relationship to time as to space; indeed, the two are inextricable. The poetry's discussion of the *imago* is ultimately geared toward investigating the ability of the monument to resist the passage of time, so the poetry must tackle both mortal experience and immortal existence.

As the poetry presents different characters functioning within the real or conceptual space surrounding the physical monument, it gradually reveals a centripetal force that enforces the memorializing purpose of the monument. In positioning the monument against the backdrop of its local landscape the poems make almost absurdly ambitious comparisons with the most striking monuments of the Roman Empire (see Section 4), but these are part of a broader denigration of the "peripheral," as it is conceived with the mausoleum of the Flavii at the center of the poems' world.<sup>52</sup> The poetry celebrates

<sup>51</sup> Henderson 2002: 140 expands upon the opposite scenario found in Plin. *Ep.* 3.6, in which the commissioning figure's ekphrastic writing anticipates, rather than responds to, an artwork.

<sup>52</sup> Related to this is the emphasis on physical proximity in the process of familial commemoration throughout Roman culture. Bodel 1997: 22–23 explains the prevalence of monumental tombs deliberately located close to the family villa. He also points out that such commemoration seems to be less concerned with burial *per se* than with a spiritual connection to the dead.



the monument's ability to draw viewers toward it, and the closer the poetry zooms in on the monument, the more lasting an experience it celebrates. The pointless imported luxuries have effects that are short-lived, and the items are themselves "condemned by their own transience": *haec cito deficiunt et habent breue munus amoris / momentis damnata suis* (A 32–33). By contrast, the monument is fixed in space and in time, and those participating in the construction of the mausoleum are as long-lasting as the monument (A 18–20):

sic sibi perpetuas faciunt impendia sedes,  
 sic immortales scit habere pecunia mores  
 aeterno quotiens stabilis bene figitur usu.

In this way expenditure creates a permanent resting place, in this way money discovers how to establish enduring traditions, when it is firm and invested well in an eternal product.

The most dramatic illustration of this comes at the culmination of the poet's comparison of the monument with external luxuries, when pride in its appearance causes the soul of the elder Flavius Secundus to rise up from the underworld into the omphalic mausoleum. There he goes from eagerly observing the monument to voluntarily uniting for eternity with the building dedicated to him (A 55–59)<sup>53</sup>:

sic immortalis haberi  
 iam debet pater ecce tuus Ditisque relict  
 tristem deseruisse domum, dum tempore toto  
 mauolt haec monumenta sequi scriptisq(ue) per aeuom  
 [ui]uere nominibus.

Your father ought now to be considered immortal—look!—and to have deserted the grim home of abandoned Dis, now that he prefers to inhabit this monument for the rest of time and to live forever in the inscribed names.

Despite the personal dynamics lying behind the mausoleum's construction, it is noticeable that in their efforts to ensure an effective commemoration the poems avoid dwelling for any length of time upon specific individuals. Instead they focus more closely on abstract social processes: relationships, actions and effects. So, for example, it is not Flavius Secundus, either the elder or younger,

<sup>53</sup> Henderson 2002 demonstrates a similar process occurring in Plin. *Ep.* 3.6, in what Henderson describes as the *symplysis* of Pliny and the statue Pliny wishes to dedicate in his own name: "Whatever else they have been, and may become, they are, in the moment of 3.6, each other's doppelgänger or supplementary *alter ego*" (161).

who is really the subject of the poetry's celebration, but the behavior that illustrates the bonds of piety between father and son: *recens pietas* (A 9), *docta pietas* (A 86) and the personified *Pietas* to which the second poem is directly addressed (B 1). The packaging of a funerary monument as a marker of social interactions is not peculiar to this particular mausoleum.<sup>54</sup> The notion of a monument as a social process as much as a material object is, however, dissected with unusual perspicacity by the poetry devoted to the commemoration of the Flavii family. The poetry does so by emphasizing the goal at which the *pietas* behind the monument actually aims: *memoratio*. Commemoration of both father and son is a result and a proof of the son's piety, but it is also an act in which more disinterested parties can, indeed must, be involved, in order to transmit the act of piety through time. The monument demands an ever-renewed audience, and it is the engagement with this audience that the poetry both portrays and facilitates. Where *pietas* defines the familial relationships behind the monument's commissioning, the creation of *memoratio* on behalf of that family defines the relationship between the poet and his readers.

The poetry allows the poet and his readers to provide multiple layers of commentary on the monument that assess, value, and ultimately guarantee its effects. All the different interpretations expressed on the monument use amplified reiteration of previous comments as a way to mark their approval. Woolf has already identified how epigraphic commemoration can promote universally recognized Roman values such as *dignitas* and *aestimatio* in a way that reflects the more general culture of *aemulatio* in Roman society. This involves constructing a delicate balance between fitting into the normative and formulaic standards recognized by society, whilst subtly inflating the claims to create something superlative and individualized (1996: 32). *Memoratio*, particularly as the poet of the Flavii mausoleum identifies it, is a version of *aemulatio* in which the performance of a viewing or reading audience is invoked: the viewers are there to recognize what is precedented, and what steps beyond the precedent. The act of *recens pietas* is explained as follows (A 11–12):

exemplo iam plena nouo, quam Flauius alto  
more Secundus agens patrio signauit honore.

[An act of piety] now full of new style, which Flavius Secundus, working within the ancient tradition, has marked out with the honor due to his father.

<sup>54</sup> Meyer 1990: 78: "A Roman tombstone ... fulfilled two functions: it commemorated the dead by simply recording the name, sometimes with his or her achievements, and it also stated in writing the commemorator's discharge of his duty. It was the Roman way of indicating the discharge of a particularly Roman obligation."

There is a fitting, perhaps intentional, confusion over the noun and adjective agreements in this phrase (*alto / more* and *patrio ... honore* or *alto ... honore* and *more ... patrio*), as well as a question mark over whether *patrio* is a reference to the commissioner's father or ancestry. The poetry questions what is original and what is revolutionary, what is a marker of the family's piety and what of the community at large (locally and globally), in this pious act of public memorialization through text and stone.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the fact that the poet couches this ambiguous phrase in the language of custom and family only goes to reinforce the connection already pointed out by Mayer in his work on exemplarity (1991), where he stresses the essentially identical motivation behind Roman notions of social *aemulatio* and literary *imitatio*.

Section 5 showed how iteration is built into the poetry's very structure and material form: the two co-dependent poems reflect each other, and their inscription on the monument sets up text and architecture as parallel functions. In the very iteration of the term *iterum* (B 1, 3) the second poem reviews the first, and the implied presence of poet and commissioner evokes an earlier meeting. Even the bees, which are described as inhabiting the mausoleum in perhaps its most dramatic illustration of life in the face of death, mirror this process. In the first poem they are given the adjective *blandus* (A 87), which picks up on the *blandae rationis imago* outlined in the first lines of the poem. Returned to in the second poem they are performing their own act of reiteration, "regularly bringing back honey": *reportantes m[ell]a frequenter apes* (B 10). Doubtless responding to their role in funerary imagery as representatives of immortality, and possibly evoking the narratives of rebirth found in the fourth book of the *Georgics*, the bees offer yet another illustration of the monument's synthesis of fruitful local inhabitation with eternal endurance

<sup>55</sup> Pikhaus 1993 has an excellent discussion of what exactly the tradition, or *mos*, might be understood to stand for here, in this confusing representation of inscription and/or monument. She concludes that the poet is referring to one of three possibilities: 1) a tradition of verse epigraphy that was established in Italy (but still alien to Africa at this time); 2) a tradition of prose inscription; or 3) a tradition of funerary monument construction (since such pyramid monuments date back at least to the third century B.C.E.), to contrast with the inscription that is a *novum ... exemplum*. As for the noun-adjective agreement, Courtney 1995: 402 assumes that *alto* agrees with *honore*, arguing that this reading is upheld by a similar concept of "lofty honor" at line A 78 (*sublimis honor*). But this diminishes the otherwise pointed Virgilian echo in the line: *Aen.* 6.780 *et pater ipse suo superum iam signat honore?* (Soubiran 1993: 73). This allusion emphasizes the paternal honor (ancestral or fatherly) and, more importantly, allows for a neat oxymoron in the contrast between *exemplo ... nouo* and *alto ... more*.

through the process of repeated celebration.<sup>56</sup> Even the father's life is made complete by the act of iteration provided by the second poem, which brings the total lines of verse up to match the 110 years of his existence.

When E. Thomas defines "monumentality" as relating more to the construction of "mental buildings" than to their concrete instantiations, he is thinking in terms of time as well as space. For Thomas, monumentality is a process: it is the constant and ongoing (re-)construction of a building's image and purpose as each new audience interacts with the architecture. Woolf too offers a refined notion of monuments as symbolic on the temporal level: "The eternity of monuments guaranteed not lasting things, but rather momentary events of lasting significance" (1996: 27). The point that both scholars make is that monuments represent an action in the past that there is not only some desire to record, but also a desire to continue celebrating. As such the temporality of monuments is predicated on guiding new audiences to rehearse the ephemeral dynamics underlying the original construction (here the *pietas* of father and son), in order to create the permanent commemoration of those actions: the eternal *memoratio*.

The characters within the poetry therefore provide a blueprint for later performances of a memorializing response to the monument. Aside from the visual signals of the monument itself—the Punic pyramid, the rooster, the sculpture, and the inscribed *tituli*—the poetry guides the responses of the "viewer" through the poet's own authoritative voice (A 54–56):

Permittant mihi [Fa]ta loq[ui n]octisq(ue) timendae  
regnator Stygius: sic immortalis haberi  
iam debet pater.

May the Fates and the Stygian ruler of dreadful night permit me to say: your father ought now to be considered immortal.

It is the poet who also guarantees the effect of the *memoratio* in his assured description of the father's resurrection, bringing him into existence above ground (A 38–40):

Nunc ego non dubitem tacitis Acherontos in umbris,  
si post fata manent sensus, gaudere parentem  
saepe, Secunde, tuum reliquas et spernere turmas.

<sup>56</sup> On bees as an Egyptian and Orphic symbol for life after death, see G. T. Thomas 1978.

Now I do not doubt that among the silent shades of Acheron, if consciousness remains after death, your father often rejoices, Secundus, and spurns the other ranks of the dead.

While the poet authorizes first acts of *memoratio*, it is the commissioner of the monument, Flavius Secundus the younger, who not only granted that initial authority, but also proves to be one of the first audience-members whose job it is to guarantee that authority. Early in the poem the poet notes that some had criticized Flavius Secundus's building of the monument on the grounds that he was not yet dead, revealing that the son, too, intended eventually to be commemorated by the mausoleum. The poet reassures the commissioner that he has done the right thing, putting himself at ease about his own life after death: *set securus eris* (A 72). Yet before this time comes, the poet presents the son as commemorating viewer, rather than commemorated. He is "Secundus" in yet one further punning way: he was "second" to his father at the beginning of the second poem (*ecce Secundus adest*, B 3); now he is "second" to the poet, who invites him to respond to the monument in the last lines of the poetry (B 19–20)<sup>57</sup>:

Opto, Secunde, geras multos feliciter annos,  
et quae fecisti tu monimenta legas.

I hope, Secundus, that you live happily for many years, and that you read the monument that you yourself made.

Whether the reading implied by the final word, *legas*, refers to a reading of the physical monument or the textual poems, or both combined, the poet has returned to the poetics of presence to encourage the kind of performative reading of the monument that will create eternal commemoration. The second Flavius Secundus made such *memoratio* possible by commissioning the work and by acting as its earliest viewer; the act of reading that he has been invited to demonstrate must then be continually re-performed after his death by future viewers of the monument.

The *imago* of the Flavii mausoleum, in conclusion, is a complex and shifting notion negotiated by the monument in both its architectural and its poetic incarnations. The *imago* referred to in the poetry may be straightforwardly defined as the monumental image that stands in stone, in a particular locale. This *imago* may include the visuals of the inscribed poem as well, or indeed the combined image of architecture and inscription. The *imago* is also the *effect*

<sup>57</sup> For the evocation of similar family responses to a tomb, see Posidippus 52 Austin-Bastianini, with Elsner 2002 and Danielewicz 2005.

of viewing the monument; it is the mental image created by the imaginative thought of those who have admired it on the spot, and who have identified (with) the *ratio* underlying the monument. This has a corollary in the more specific audio-visual mental reconstructions that occur when readers engage with the poem that was written to accompany the monument. The poem asks its readers to reconstruct the specifics of the mausoleum in its particular setting: not just its appearance, but also the voices (human and animal, dead and alive) that were instrumental in its construction and continue to shape its later reception.

The collaboration between representative *imago* and creative-interpretative *ratio* in the effort to achieve eternal *memoratio* is a process that shuttles between the different visual, textual, and virtual manifestations of the monument of the Flavii. The various features of the building combine and contrast with each other in a productive counterpoint, demonstrating the complementary functions, scope, and effects of writing and architecture. Above all, the more “literary” features of the poetry, which bookishly expose and emphasize the metaphysical and extra-temporal aspects of the viewing process, are given a neatly (and intentionally?) ironic twist by the fact that the survival of the poetry ultimately proved dependent on it being embedded in the solid and enduring mausoleum. “An inscription ... has a strong physicality; it is even, in the case of marble statuary, carved out of the same material as the image itself. It functions as both text *and* image” (Platt 2007: 251). The poetry, carved into the very stone of the monument of the Flavii, is ultimately “both text *and* image,” just as the architecture is both image *and* text. This is what Flavius Secundus the elder and the younger were supposedly delighted to “read,” and it is the multifaceted *imago* to which the contemporary *uaga turba* will forever turn its memorializing attention.

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